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FOR WHA/BSC AND OES/PCI
COMMERCE FOR ALEXANDER PEACHER

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SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: A/S SHANNON DISCUSSES COOPERATION WITH
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MINISTER BARANAO

REF: BUENOS AIRES 00273

Summary

1. Innovation and cooperation were the major themes of A/S Shannon's meeting with Minister of Science and Technology Lino Baranao on April 11. Baranao and A/S Shannon agreed that partnership on S&T issues is mutually beneficial and should be included in the framework for bilateral cooperation arising from Shannon's visit. Baranao agreed to work more closely with innovation-driven U.S. companies. To kick-start that relationship, Baranao committed to attend a roundtable discussion with such companies that Ambassador Wayne will host. End Summary.

Innovation and Cooperation

2. During an April 11 meeting with A/S Shannon and Ambassador Wayne, Baranao emphasized his vision for a more innovative, internationally competitive Argentine S&T sector (Reftel). He seemed to embrace the prospect of working together with the United States in areas of mutual interest, saying that Argentina cannot reach its S&T goals alone. A/S Shannon agreed that our positive bilateral agenda with Argentina goes beyond mere politics, and told Baranao that he wants to incorporate S&T collaboration into the bilateral framework for cooperation arising from his visit.

3. Baranao believes that Argentina is entering a "new era" of cooperation with sovereign and private sector partners. The creation of the new Science and Technology Ministry makes high-level cooperation easier, according to Baranao, who sees interaction with various partners as the best way for Argentina to move forward towards its goals. He particularly wants to encourage entrepreneurship within Argentina's scientific community, changing a national scientific culture that he said still finds something discreditable about turning research into profit. Baranao sees the United States as a model of entrepreneurial spirit. A/S Shannon concurred that scientific breakthroughs often lead to commercial breakthroughs, contributing to a vibrant economy.

Common Ground and Common Goals

4. Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship will require stronger protections of Intellectual Property Rights, Baranao acknowledged. He said that Argentina hopes to attract more

investments from multinational companies, specifically mentioning his interest in the fields of biomedical research, bio-technology and nanotechnology.

¶5. Ambassador Wayne suggested that the embassy organize a roundtable with U.S. private sector participants to brainstorm ideas for future S&T cooperation. Baranao liked the idea and said that he would be pleased to attend such an event after his upcoming trip to Europe. Ambassador Wayne also invited Baranao to partner with the embassy in promoting S&T issues at Buenos Aires, annual International Book Fair, a major Public Diplomacy event for the embassy. Baranao promised to consider the idea, and agreed that it was important to find ways to make science more appealing to youth. A/S Shannon wrapped up by stressing that the United States is enthusiastic about broadening and deepening what has been a long-standing and fruitful bilateral cooperation in the areas of science, technology and education.

Comment

¶6. A frequently-raised complaint of the U.S. business community in Argentina is that companies lack access to higher levels of the Argentine government. Baranao's agreement to meet with U.S. companies at the ambassador's residence should therefore be an excellent opportunity for those companies. Baranao, who lived and worked for over three years in the U.S., evinces good will towards our country. We will work to parlay that sentiment toward an even fuller and mutually beneficial science and technology relationship with Argentina.

WAYNE